

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for the preparation of salt melts, and mixtures thereof, of the ~~general~~ formula



in which

M is Li, Na, K, Rb or Cs,

D is Al, Ga, In or Tl, and

X is F, Cl, Br or I,

~~essentially consisting of~~ comprising a heatable stirred reactor (1) and a downstream tubular reactor (4), wherein the stirred reactor (1) contains a zone which, owing to the tank geometry, cannot contain solids, and the tubular reactor (4) or its feed line extends into this solid free zone.

2. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the tubular reactor (4) is arranged vertically.

3. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein solids metering units (2,3) for controlled addition of mixing of the starting materials are arranged upstream of the stirred reactor (1).

4. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a purification unit (5,6), ~~consisting of~~ comprising a column or tower (5) filled with metal granules (d) and a column or tower filled with alkali metal salt (MX), is arranged downstream of the tubular reactor (4).

5. (Currently Amended) Process for the preparation of salt melts of the ~~general~~ formula in which

M is Li, Na, K, Rb or Cs,

D is Al, Ga, In or Tl, and

X is F, Cl, Br or I,

by reacting a metal halide of the formula DX_3 (II) with an alkali metal salt of the formula MX (III), ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the reaction is carried out in an apparatus according to Claim 1, where the reaction is carried out firstly in a stirred reactor (1) and subsequently in a tubular reactor (4).

6. (Currently Amended) Process according to Claim 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the salts are reacted at different temperatures in the stirred reactor (1) and the tubular reactor (4).

7. (Currently Amended) Process according to Claim 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the salts are reacted at temperatures between 50 and 800°C.

8. (Currently Amended) Process according to Claim 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the reaction is carried out continuously.

9. – 11. (Canceled)

12. (New) An electrochemical cell or battery comprising a melt electrolyte which comprises a salt of the formula (I) prepared by the process of claim 5.

13. (New) An electrochemical cell or battery of claim 12, which is a sodium battery or a primary battery.

14. (New) A heat storage medium or heat-transfer medium which comprises a salt of the formula (I) prepared by the process of claim 5.

15. (New) A method for blanketing and purifying molten metals which comprises contacting them with a salt of the formula (I) prepared by the process of claim 5.

16. (New) A method for electrocoating materials which comprises electrocoating them with a salt of the formula (I) prepared by the process of claim 5.